

The Fight for Samarra: Full-Spectrum Operations in Modern Warfare

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SHORTLY AFTER midnight on the morning of 1 October 2004, Iraqi and U.S. Army 1st Infantry Division (1st ID) forces attacked the predominantly Sunni Muslim city of Samarra, Iraq, to kill or capture anti-Iraqi forces (AIF) and return the city to competent civilian control. The operation was deliberate, precise, and struck the enemy simultaneously from multiple directions. By noon, Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) controlled key government and religious sites. In slightly more than 2 days of fighting, over 125 AIF were killed, 60 wounded, and 128 detained.

The combined operation of the ISF and Colonel Randy Dragon's 2d Brigade Combat Team (BCT) swiftly defeated the enemy and freed Samarra from the clutches of the AIF. Iraqi and U.S. leaders heralded the operation as a model for the rest of Iraq.¹ The Interim Iraqi Government (IIG) had needed a "Sunni victory" to jump-start a nationwide campaign to deny insurgents safe havens and set conditions for successful national elections. The 1st ID's victory at Samarra was the first such victory and had a strategic effect, both in Iraq and the United States.

However, victory in the battle for Samarra during the early days of October 2004 marked neither the beginning nor the end of Operation Baton Rouge, which was a full-spectrum operation. The fight for Samarra was not won on completion of the kinetic phase of operations. A months-long division effort along four lines of operations executed from the strategic to the tactical level preceded and followed the kinetic phase. In fact, the kinetic phase much read about in newspapers was not at all the decisive point in the fight for Samarra. Clearing the city of AIF was necessary, but not sufficient.

The Road to Baton Rouge

What was decisive to the operation was restoring control of Samarra to competent, respected Iraqi civil and police authorities. This required the

1st ID to—

- Prevent a security vacuum from developing when coalition forces (CF) reduced their post-combat presence.

- Conduct concurrent information operations (IO) to reinforce the legitimacy of Iraqi civil and security force leaders.

- Begin reconstruction efforts to improve the quality of life in Samarra and give its residents alternatives to the insurgency.

Success in these three tasks required—

- Envisioning a full-spectrum end state.

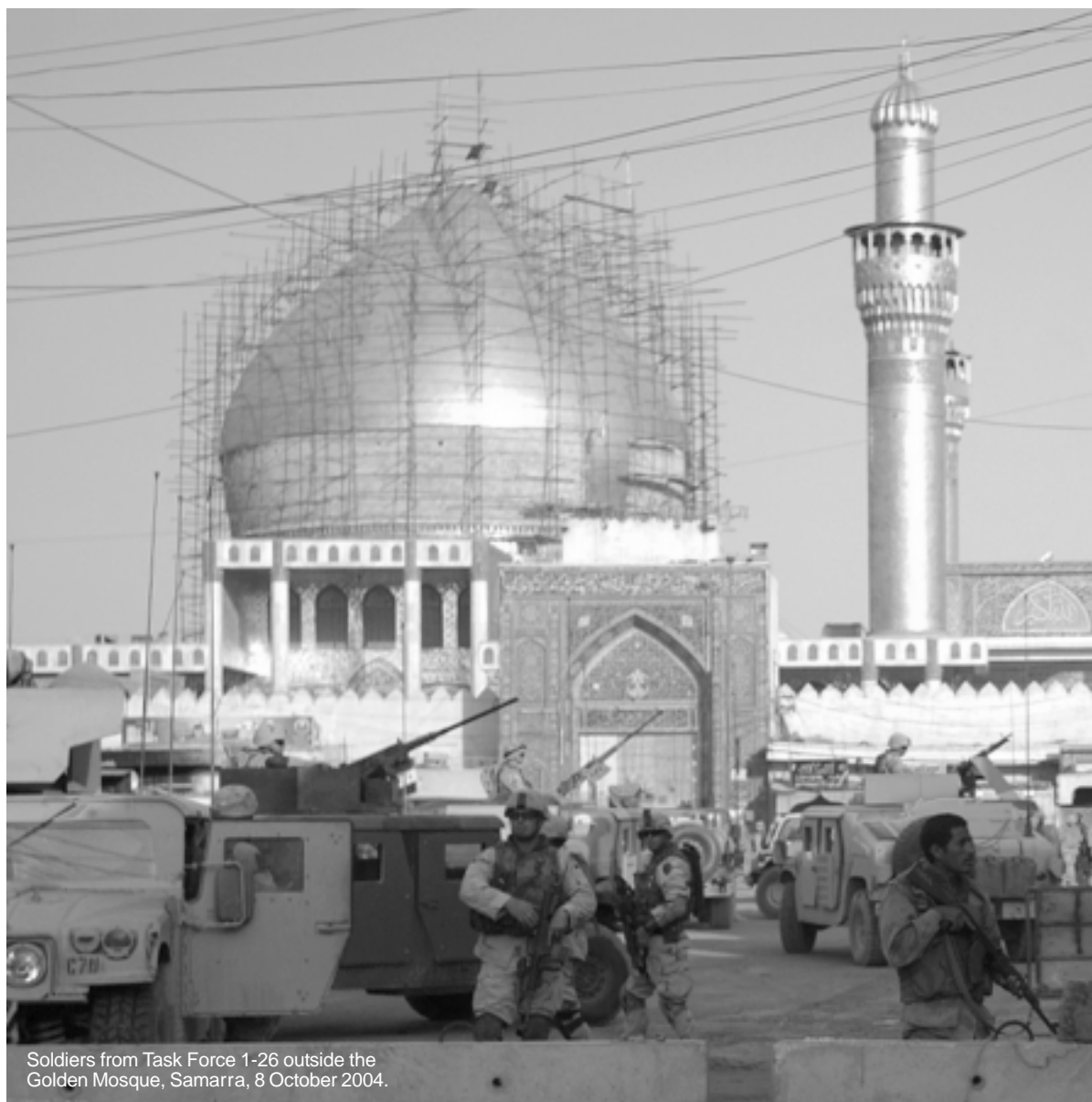
- Developing a range of options based on changing conditions in Samarra.

- Setting the right conditions for the decisive phase of operations before beginning the kinetic phase.

- Applying diplomatic, informational, military, and economic instruments of power, not only at the IIG and Multinational Force-Iraq (MNF-I) levels, but down to the company command level.

During the transition phase of operations, the division expected setbacks, even months after major combat operations ended. These expectations proved correct. In the Iraqi theater of operations, decisive does not mean rapid. While the 1st ID won battles against insurgents elsewhere in Iraq through stability operations and support operations (SOSO) and relatively low levels of combat operations, the 1st ID's fight for Samarra is an excellent example of full-spectrum operations.

Some observers contend that only an Iraqi-led, nonviolent, negotiated solution in Samarra would have represented true success. Others point to the rapid execution of the kinetic phase of the operation as the success. Both are wrong; the former turned out to be infeasible, and the latter misses the larger picture. The 1st ID and ISF were close to creating a peaceful solution, but either through



Soldiers from Task Force 1-26 outside the Golden Mosque, Samarra, 8 October 2004.

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their strength or by intimidation, the insurgents made a nonviolent solution impossible.

The success of Operation Baton Rouge is that soldiers, noncommissioned officers, and leaders throughout the 1st ID combat team understood the nuances of SOSO and combat operations and simultaneously executed them in such a manner that they—

- ▢ Reduced support for the insurgency.
- ▢ Enabled a rapid, precise kinetic operation with minimal loss of innocent life and damage to civilian property.
- ▢ Facilitated a quick transition to the decisive phase.
- ▢ Created an environment in which the most

difficult tasks, those associated with transitioning to Iraqi control, of the decisive phase could be tackled.

Violence in Samarra

In July 2003, Task Force (TF) 1-66, 4th Infantry Division (4th ID), established a forward operating base (FOB) in Samarra after major ground combat operations in Operation Iraqi Freedom ended. Because of increased insurgent activity in Samarra and the surrounding area, the 4th ID conceived Operation Ivy Blizzard in November 2003. Its mission: kill or capture the enemy and return control of Samarra to the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, later the Iraqi National Guard (ING) (now the Iraqi Army [IA]).

Operation Ivy Blizzard began on 17 December 2003, but key enemy leaders had fled Samarra in anticipation of H-hour. By February 2004, many insurgent leaders had returned to Samarra to regain their influence in the city. After the transfer of authority (TOA) from the 4th ID to the 1st ID in March 2004, Samarra remained restive.

In April 2004, attacks against coalition forces in Samarra increased from 5 to 15 a week as a result of uprisings in Fallujah and Najaf. Some ISF personnel deserted or collaborated with the enemy. On 30 May 2004, TF 1-26 (the Blue Spaders), which had assumed responsibility for Samarra after the TOA, began Operation Spader Strike, encountering stiff resistance when it sought to kill or capture high-payoff targets.

Samarra had become a safe haven for several hundred insurgents and foreign fighters and was plagued by the rivalries of crime families and 7 major and 11 minor tribes, all vying for influence. On 2 June 2004, Samarra's city council president resigned, and a person known to have connections with AIF replaced him. Four days later, provincial police reinforcements arrived to help bring the city under control, but most abandoned their posts or collaborated with the enemy. In June, the commander of the 202d ING Battalion deserted his post, and most of his soldiers followed suit. He was later murdered in the streets of Baghdad.

A local security vacuum quickly emerged, and the enemy launched sporadic, unorganized attacks against coalition forces. Several civilian leaders presented the police a list of demands and promised an end to hostilities if CF and ISF vacated the city. In early July, enemy forces shifted their focus to the 202d ING Battalion headquarters located just outside the city across the Tigris River at Patrol Base (PB) Razor. One week later, a suicide bomber dressed in a police uniform and driving an Iraqi police vehicle attacked the headquarters with a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED). Nearly simultaneously, AIF attacked PB Razor with small arms and indirect fire. Five Blue Spaders lost their lives; 20 others were wounded.

The 2d BCT isolated the city by closing the Tigris River bridge, the only approach into Samarra from the west. A major operation to reassert control over Samarra became necessary. With MNF-I and Multinational Corps-Iraq (MNC-I), the division had been planning for a month what would later be called Operation Baton Rouge. The key question was, "What must be done to ensure long-term success?"

The Campaign Plan

After enemy attacks in and around Samarra during the spring and summer, including the perfidious VBIED suicide attack at PB Razor, it would have been easy for 1st ID leaders to see Samarra as a relatively straightforward problem; that is, as a densely populated urban area of 250,000 people under the control of several hundred enemy forces the 1st ID had to capture or kill.

However, viewing the fight for Samarra through the lens of the campaign plan enabled 1st ID leaders to see a host of complex problems with no quick or easy solutions. The 1st ID would have to envision the full-spectrum end state, wage a deliberate campaign, and set conditions for its decisive phase. Otherwise, any victory would be short-lived, and the insurgents would quickly fill any power vacuum. Operation Baton Rouge would be a full-spectrum operation.

Task Force Danger was a 22,000-soldier-strong 1st ID task force responsible for four provinces of northcentral Iraq.² Task Force Danger's mission and commander's intent (derived from the MNF-I campaign plan) set forth four lines of operations:

1. Governance.
2. Communications.
3. Economic development.
4. Security.

Full-spectrum operations, which were necessary to break the cycle of violence within the provinces of northcentral Iraq, would simultaneously—

- Execute intelligence-driven combat operations to kill or capture AIF while also equipping, training, and mentoring ISF.

- Forge relationships with civic, religious, and tribal leaders and empower them to establish functioning local governments.

- Rebuild the nation's infrastructure and economy.

- Change attitudes.

- Give Iraqis alternatives to the insurgency.

In short, any operation in Samarra had to be driven by and nested within the overarching campaign plan. Developing a range of options in response to changing conditions in the city was also important.³

On 16 July 2004, Operations Plan Baton Rouge was approved as a four-phase operation. Phase I was to set conditions and conduct reconnaissance and preparation. During Phase II, forces were to isolate the area. Phase III included search and attack operations. Phase IV was the transition—and decisive—phase. Phases I through III could be adapted to changing conditions or eliminated altogether.



Task Force Danger employed the 1st ID's fires and effects coordination cell (FECC), led by Division Artillery Commander Colonel Rich Longo to develop the effects the division desired to achieve across the battlespace. The division devised programs to achieve lethal and nonlethal effects along the four lines of operations and synchronized them to maintain unity of effort throughout the battlespace. Setting the conditions in Samarra was a subset of this larger effort.

Governance. The 1st ID defined the line of operation as the engagement of ISF, provincial, city, religious, and tribal leaders. The 1st ID's experience in the Balkans led it to name this group the "sphere of influence" (SOI). Task Force Danger engaged with the SOI daily at all levels. Company commanders engaged village or neighborhood leaders and individual sheiks; battalion commanders engaged groups of sheiks, city councils, and mayors; brigade commanders engaged provincial governors, and governing and imam councils. The commanding general met monthly with all four provincial governors at a governors' conference and convened a sheiks' coun-

cil, which gathered the senior and most influential sheiks from across the area of operations (AO).

Task Force Danger took the line of operations one step farther by developing the Iraqi Senior Advisory Council (ISAC), whose members were prominent academics, doctors, former military officers, imams, sheiks, and other elites. The ISAC met bi-weekly and was useful in enabling TF Danger to see the situation in Samarra through the eyes of the Iraqi people. More important, the relationships the task force developed with council members proved invaluable.

The 1st ID required its major subordinate commands to appoint ministry coordinators (MCs) to work with ministers at the provincial level and frequently at the national level in Baghdad. For example, the 1st ID Engineer Brigade, led by Colonel Bill Haight, was responsible for the ministry of oil and ministry of electricity. The ministry of oil MC worked with Iraqi officials to ensure Samarra had ample supplies of fuel, heating oil, and natural gas on hand after the cessation of hostilities. The ministry of electricity MC worked with ministry representatives to restore and improve electrical service to Samarra and to turn off power

quickly to any part of the city to take advantage of night-vision optics during military operations. The relationships, trust, and confidence ministry coordinators forged with their Iraqi counterparts were critical to the mission.

Communications. Any spectacular enemy attack made headlines around the world. In our opinion, the international news media, including major U.S. television networks and print media, largely emphasized negative events, especially during the period leading up to the U.S. presidential election. Of course, the enemy, using media representatives sympathetic to his cause, waged disinformation campaigns to discredit the Iraqi government and coalition forces, which called for a proactive, agile, and coordinated IO, psychological operations (PSYOP), and public affairs (PA) battle drill to correct inaccurate or incomplete reporting. This team never allowed such reporting to go without a response of nonlethal "counterfire."

As an example, the task force expected the enemy to fight from mosques, use human shields when crossing open areas, and intentionally gather

in congested areas. When the enemy later confirmed these expectations during Operation Baton Rouge, some news agencies were inclined to report the few (although tragic) deaths of innocent people and attribute them to the wanton use of overwhelming U.S. firepower—a totally false conclusion. The IO/PSYOP/PA team prepared and coordinated talking points for leaders to counter these reports. Subsequent coverage by all major news agencies reported the story correctly. The enemy had used innocent people and holy sites as shields, and CF and ISF had been careful to respond with the appropriate level of precision fires.

Furthermore, insurgents often indiscriminately launched rockets and fired mortars in cities throughout northcentral Iraq. After one attack in Tikrit, an international news agency reported that civilians were killed because they were caught in crossfire between U.S. forces and insurgents. Within an hour, the IO/PSYOP/PA battle drill resulted in broadcast and publication of accurate reports and on-the-scene coverage by local media for independent verification of the facts. Both Arabic and international agencies began reporting the correct story, using talking points written by the division. The key was never letting an inaccurate report go by without an attempt to correct it. One measure of effectiveness was that such efforts resulted in Iraqi and several international news outlets regularly checking facts with the division PA officer before publishing stories.

Task Force Danger banged the good news drum loudly, not only to obtain balanced and accurate reporting globally, but to inform the Iraqi people of the genuine progress being made to restore order and to convince them their security forces and leaders were capable. If the drumbeats were many and frequent, public awareness of progress could create an irreversible momentum toward representative government and prosperity. The task force seized the IO initiative and isolated the enemy from the populace.

Units throughout the division produced daily “drumbeats”—simple one-page English and Arabic summaries of good news stories across the four lines of operations—and distributed them to media outlets and higher headquarters. After the 28 June 2004 transfer of sovereignty in Iraq, the drumbeats increasingly emphasized the growing proficiency and independence of governmental bodies and security forces. To increase the IIG’s credibility in the eyes of the Iraqi people, the FECC generated IO themes, messages, and talking points and disseminated them to leaders down to squad level.

The division also held regularly scheduled press conferences, issued an average of more than 120 press releases per week, and took painstaking care to remain impartial and transparent. Task Force Danger encouraged leaders and soldiers to talk to the press and routinely embedded journalists and reporters with units. “Embeds” from the major news networks and print media proved invaluable during Operation Baton Rouge. Embedded reporters gained a perspective on the situation in the division’s AO that was impossible to obtain in Baghdad. On many occasions, journalists commented they had been unaware that so much was happening in the AO until they were embedded with units. Reporters embedded with units before and during Operation Baton Rouge had unfettered access to soldiers and leaders, witnessed the events of the operation as they unfolded, and gained an appreciation for CF and ISF accomplishments, the difficulties inherent in restoring Iraqi control to Samarra and moving the city forward. As a result, Iraqi and international audiences enjoyed fair and balanced reporting.

The commanding general recorded radio addresses every week, and brigade and many battalion commanders hosted radio or television talkshows with their Iraqi counterparts. After the transfer of sovereignty, the division did not halt these efforts. It prepared Iraqi leaders for appearances in front of the camera or behind the microphone and held events that enabled tribal, religious, and ethnic leaders to come together to discuss pressing issues. The explosive growth of media attendance at, and the enthusiastic public participation in, these events demonstrated their effectiveness in building public confidence in governance. These participatory activities provided peaceful, constructive outlets for social pressures created under Saddam Hussein’s regime.

In addition, a mobile broadcast station located at a FOB 10 kilometers from Samarra broadcast IO messages and Iraqi music as part of a sophisticated IO campaign to discredit the AIF and gain the support of Samarra’s residents. The task force distributed thousands of handheld radios throughout Samarra to support this effort.

The net effect of the 1st ID’s communications lines of operations was that Samarrans saw that a better life was possible if they supported (or at least did not actively oppose) CF and ISF efforts to free Samarra from AIF control. Overt support of coalition forces was risky for the average Samaritan because of the level of intimidation in the city before Operation Baton Rouge. After the kinetic phase of



the operation, however, human intelligence (HUMINT) tips and active reporting to the city's Joint Coordination Center spiked, providing ISF with actionable intelligence daily. The 2d Ministry of Information (MOI) Battalion, which was assigned duties in Samarra after the kinetic phase of Operation Baton Rouge, conducted over 200 raids during the next 5 months, using information Samarrans provided. The people of Samarra knew the AIF stood in the way of progress and a return to normalcy. The 1st ID's communications operations reduced the pool of opportunists or fence-sitters available to insurgents and criminals.

Economic development. Another way to drive a wedge between the people of Samarra and the AIF was to improve the quality of life in the city and give Samarrans an alternative to the insurgency by putting them back to work. The 1st ID used economic development and reconstruction in several important ways, showcasing progress on this front in other parts of the region to demonstrate to Samarrans what they were missing. The 1st ID emphasized that progress would come to Samarra only after the city met certain conditions. Task Force Danger sought to meet people's needs, but also leveraged them to ensure its time and resources were well spent. Once CF and ISF cleared the enemy from the city, the task force began construction projects to build the credibility of newly installed leaders. The rapid start of projects bought leaders enough time to get the city back on its feet and gave fence-sitters an alternative to the insurgency. To this end, 22 high-impact projects that would generate large numbers of jobs were identified before the first

shot was ever fired. Contracts for projects valued at \$10 million were let under the Accelerated Iraqi Reconstruction Program.

Security. Killing or capturing AIF in Samarra was necessary. However, to ensure success, the 1st ID had to set other conditions before beginning kinetic operations. Perhaps the most critical was sustaining a stable, secure environment. The division had to not only kill the enemy but prevent a security vacuum from developing after combat operations

ended. To accomplish this, CF and ISF remained in Samarra while the task force recruited, trained, and equipped a police force of 1,200 officers—an ongoing task. The division allocated additional combat power to the 2d BCT to weight the division main effort.⁴ With the exception of TF 1-26 and the 1-4 Cavalry, which operated in and around Samarra, units attacked from the march and withdrew back to their areas of responsibility within 96 hours. The division tactical command post, led by Brigadier General (BG) John Morgan, controlled this complex facet of the operation. In a battlespace the size of West Virginia, the division decided where to take risks everyday, but leaving vacuums in battalion sectors for long periods of time was unacceptable. ISF were needed in Samarra.

The 2d BCT received help from the IIG's MOI and the ministry of defense (MOD) to integrate elements from six Iraqi battalions into the concept of the operation.⁵ The 1st ID made it clear to the IIG it was unwise to begin Operation Baton Rouge without these Iraqi forces in place because they increased the overall size of the force to prevent a power vacuum and demonstrated that the ISF was potent and credible. Unfortunately, the new IIG bureaucracy moved slowly and allocated these forces to the division just days before execution of the operation. The governor of Salah Ad Din Province promised to supply hundreds of provincial police to Samarra after the cessation of hostilities. At a nearby FOB, the task force stockpiled force-protection materials to harden government buildings and police stations and readied equipment, weapons, and new vehicles for the police force, including several mobile

police stations, which TF Danger engineers fabricated using milvans.

Operation Baton Rouge was a test for the new IA battalions. A few of the battalions had previously been put to the test and the results had been unsettling. In April and June 2004, soldiers of the poorly led and not well-trained 202d IA Battalion, based in Samarra, deserted their posts in the face of the enemy. Task Force Danger and the 2d BCT set out to rebuild the 202d IA Battalion from the ground up by finding the right leaders, recruiting soldiers loyal to the cause, and training and equipping the organization while it was out of contact with the enemy. Two cohort classes of new recruits were trained at a division training facility in Tikrit. This approach proved effective and later served as a model for training Samarran police. An important point is that these new recruits for the 202d IA Battalion did not come from the Samarra area. This prevented AIF in the city from threatening and intimidating the soldiers' families, which would have severely affected the unit's effectiveness.

The plan to retake Samarra permitted only the ISF to enter sensitive sites (such as the famous Golden Mosque), an aspect intended to send another important message to the Iraqi people. The native-speaking ISF also provided a much quicker reaction to HUMINT gleaned from Samarrans and detainees and could recognize foreign fighters and Iraqis who were not from Samarra.

The division learned an important lesson from Colonel Dana Pittard's 3d BCT (the Dukes) operating in neighboring Diyala Province: even with additional ISF, coalition forces should not leave Samarra during the transition phase. In June 2004, the 3d BCT routed the enemy from Baqubah, a city once a hotbed of insurgent activity. The Dukes never left Baqubah after major combat operations concluded; they maintained a strong, unobtrusive presence but responded forcefully to any enemy move, which emboldened the ISF. Coalition forces would thereafter have a permanent foothold in the city. Staying in Baqubah filled the ISF with confidence and sent a clear message to the AIF that it could not exploit a vacuum. Accordingly, Operation Baton Rouge called for the 2d BCT to maintain a foothold in Samarra at permanent patrol bases, later named Uvanni and Olson (after two U.S. soldiers killed in action during the fight for Samarra).⁶

Execution

In mid-July, with Operation Plan Baton Rouge planning complete, 1st ID leaders joined the MOI and MOD at strategic planning group and senior advisory council meetings in Baghdad to discuss

courses of action. Naturally, all involved desired to resolve the situation in Samarra peacefully, and the IIG wanted to explore all options.

Shaping operations. Task Force Danger began shaping operations to deny the enemy time to set his defenses while the IIG deliberated. On 22 July, the 2d BCT conducted Operation Cajun Mousetrap I, the first of three shaping operations. Operations Cajun Mousetrap II and III followed on 5, 13, and 14 August. In total, an estimated 59 insurgents were killed, and the Mousetrap operations allowed the 2d BCT to gather critical intelligence about how and where the enemy intended to fight, which allowed the brigade to employ its combat power more effectively during Phases II and III of Operation Baton Rouge. Not surprisingly, the shaping operations persuaded prominent leaders and residents of Samarra to seek a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

Conditions for peace. In late August, the 1st ID commanding general and the 2d BCT commander told Samarran leaders the city had to meet four conditions before the Tigris River bridge would reopen. Samarrans had to—

1. Identify and seat a new mayor and city council.
2. Install a new chief of police capable of exercising control of the security situation.
3. Cease insurgent activity.
4. Provide CF and ISF unimpeded access throughout the city.

The division communicated these conditions and its IO themes and messages to selected SOIs—prominent sheiks and imams—who lent legitimacy to these negotiations. By 10 September, Samarra had reelected a city council and selected a police chief, and CF and ISF had entered the city for the first time in several weeks with unimpeded access. As a result, the 1st ID opened the bridge over the Tigris River for limited periods of time. Because Samarra had met the outlined conditions, the 2d BCT moved directly to Phase IV of Operation Baton Rouge. Coalition forces and local leaders consulted and finalized contracts for 22 high-impact reconstruction and infrastructure improvement projects.

A spike in violence. Regrettably, the halt in insurgent activity was short-lived. Between 10 and 19 September, the AIF attacked CF and ISF no less than 83 times. On 16 September, Samarra's acting chief of police buckled under intimidation and resigned. Enemy activity spiked the following day. On 19 September, the 2d BCT again closed the Tigris River bridge and prepared to return to Phase I-B.

Even though the conditions required to resolve the situation peacefully were not upheld, the 1st ID's attempts to reach a nonviolent solution gave the CF

Task Force 1-26 sets an outer cordon while soldiers from the 36th Commando Battalion (Iraqi Army) clear the Golden Mosque.



US Army

and ISF legitimacy for future operations and enabled the sheiks to convince Samarrans not to support the insurgents or resist CF and ISF operations.

Meanwhile, the 7th and 202d IA Battalions moved into staging areas near Samarra. The 7th IA began rehearsals and training with the 2d BCT. Having additional ISF assets was beneficial, but their reception and staging proved to be a challenge for the already strapped Division Support Command (DISCOM), the 167th Corps Support Group, division engineers, and the 264th Combat Engineer Group. Led by BG Steven Mundt, the DISCOM and the engineers quickly executed a superb plan to build a FOB from the ground up to accommodate the 7th IA Battalion. Without adequate facilities, these Iraqi soldiers would have simply returned home. Because the ISF's participation was a critical element to success, the 1st ID simply could not let this happen.

The kinetic solution. By the end of September, through violence and intimidation, the enemy had rendered Samarra's government and police force ineffective. Samarrans wanted to resolve the situation peacefully, but the insurgency reached levels that city leaders and the fledgling police force found unmanageable. The IIG acknowledged that a kinetic solution was unavoidable. On 28 September, the IIG reached a formal decision to conduct offensive operations to defeat the insurgency.

Shortly after midnight on the morning of 1 Octo-

ber, CF and ISF began Phase II of Operation Baton Rouge, a well-rehearsed, deliberate, precise strike from multiple directions to kill or capture the enemy. By noon, key government and religious sites were under ISF control and the enemy was largely defeated.

Baton Rouge Continues

Coalition forces and ISF now controlled the city, but the most difficult challenges still lay ahead. As expected, generating a police force was the long pole in the tent of transitioning to Iraqi control. Progress came slowly. On several occasions in November 2004, concurrent with Operation Al Fajr in Fallujah, a number of insurgents returned to the city to target the police force, killing 15 policemen in one raid.

By mid-November, Samarra had seen 6 different chiefs of police in 6 months, and the provincial governor had not followed through on his promise to supply hundreds of provincial police. In fact, Salah Ah Din Province largely washed its hands of Samarra after the MOI appointed an interim administrator to direct police operations, thus removing any incentive for the province to invest time and resources in the city.

Although efforts to build the police force had been moving slowly, the MOI's December decision to remove provincial authority over Samarra's police force reversed much of what had been accom-

plished in the previous 2 months. By January 2005, however, the 1st ID had regained traction in establishing a cohesive police force, and on 3 February the first cohort of 280 policemen began an intensive training program in Tikrit, out of contact with the enemy. A new, competent, dedicated police chief accompanied the cohort.

Notwithstanding the rocky start in establishing the police force, other ISF operating in the city soon began exerting pressure on the remaining insurgents and criminals that once held Samarra hostage. The loss of more than 90 AIF weapons and munitions caches to CF and ISF after 1 October 2004 severely hurt the insurgents. Intelligence-driven raids to capture or kill AIF continue to knock the enemy off balance, keep him on the move, and limit his ability to conduct deliberate operations or acts of intimidation. The insurgents were unprepared for and unable to defend against the MOI's Special Police Commando Battalion exploitation force. The MOI's soldiers are gradually reducing the pool of AIF combatants, denying the AIF fresh recruits, and earning the trust and confidence of Samarrans.

After Action Report

Life in Samarra has returned to normal. Schools are open, businesses are recovering, and power and water services outpace pre-Operation Baton Rouge levels. The high-impact projects coordinated with lo-

cal leaders in September began immediately after the conclusion of combat operations, and an additional 136 projects valued in excess of \$15 million were identified early in Phase IV. Four months after kinetic operations, 46 projects had been completed and 44 were in progress. Working through MNC-I, the division secured over \$25 million from the IIG for Samarra's reconstruction. In November, the division pushed for and received an additional \$10 million in U.S. funds to maintain forward momentum in the city.

Although Samarran Sunnis are still apprehensive about their role in the new Iraq, insurgents and criminals no longer hold Samarra hostage. Operation Baton Rouge instilled hope of a brighter future in Samarra, and there is no turning back. In the words of one sheik, "We are proud that Samarra did not turn out like Fallujah."⁷ Successful elections on 30 January locked in the irreversible momentum. The citizens of Samarra now have an alternative to the insurgency.

Coalition forces are still working the decisive phase of Operation Baton Rouge. A true victory—long-term security and stability under competent civil and police authorities—will require persistence and patience. However, operations thus far appear to have validated the Army's doctrine of full-spectrum operations—kill or capture the enemy, change attitudes, and provide alternatives to insurgency. **MR**

NOTES

1. See "Rumsfeld Sees Retaking of Samarra as Model: Defense Secretary Outlines Three-Step Process for Defeating Iraqi Resistance," *The Washington Post*, 5 October 2004, A20. See also "Rumsfeld: Samarra is Model," *Cincinnati Post*, 5 October 2004, A4. For comments by interior minister Falaḥ Naqib and national security adviser Qassim Daoud, see "U.S., Iraqi Forces Control Samarra; Sporadic Fighting Continues After Major Offensive North of Baghdad," *The Washington Post*, 3 October 2004, A30; "Aided by Iraqis, U.S. Seizes Part of Rebel Town," *The New York Times*, 2 October 2004, A1; "Americans and Iraqis Press Effort to Secure Samarra," *The New York Times*, 3 October 2004, A23.

2. Northcentral Iraq consists of Salah ad Din, Diyala, Kirkuk (formerly At Ta'mim), and As Sulaymaniyah provinces.

3. Leaders of the 2d Brigade Combat Team (BCT) developed the concept of developing a range of options, which allowed the BCT commander to choose from a menu of lethal and nonlethal actions based on the dynamic situation in Samarra.

4. 1-4 Cavalry, Task Force (TF) 1-26, TF 1-18, TF 1-77, TF 1-14, the 2-108 Infantry (IN), C/1-150 IN, TF 1-7, the 9th Engineers, and 1-1 Aviation. Task Force 1-7 was based on 1-7 Field Artillery (FA), the direct support artillery battalion for the 2d BCT. Minus several gun sections, the battalion trained and deployed as a motorized

infantry battalion task force. Task Force 1-14 is a light infantry battalion assigned to the 2d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (ID). The 2-108 IN is an air assault infantry battalion from the New York National Guard. Both 2-25 and 2-108 IN were attached to TF Danger during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) II. The 1-150 IN is part of the 30th BCT (North Carolina National Guard). The 30th BCT was also attached to TF Danger during OIF II.

5. Iraqi Security Force (ISF) formations included the 201st, 202d, 203d, and 7th Iraqi Army (IA) Battalions, the 1st Ministry of Information (MOI) Special Police Commando Battalion, and the 36th Commando Battalion.

6. Patrol Base Uvanni was named in honor of SGT Michael A. Uvanni the only soldier lost during Operation Baton Rouge, Phase III, 1 through 4 October 2004. Uvanni, a member of C Company, 2d Battalion, 108th Infantry, New York National Guard, was killed by sniper fire on the morning of 1 October. A second patrol base (PB), originally named PB Casino, was later renamed PB Olson in honor of SSG Todd Olson, C Company, 1-128 IN, Wisconsin National Guard, who was killed in Samarra on 26 December 2004.

7. Sheik Najmi made this statement at a December 2004 Iraqi senior advisory council meeting.

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Lieutenant Colonel Paul R. Daniels, U.S. Army, was the Special Assistant to the Commanding General during Operation Iraqi Freedom II and will assume command of the 1st Battalion, 33d Field Artillery, 1st Infantry Division Artillery, in June 2005. He received a B.E. from the Stevens Institute of Technology, an M.P.A. from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, is a graduate of CGSC, and has held a Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellowship. He has served in various command and staff positions in CONUS, Europe, Kuwait, Iraq, Japan, and Haiti.

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